

**June 10, 2013**

## **D.C. Lawyers Honor Civil Rights Advocacy**



*Senior Judge John Ferren receives the Wiley A. Branton Award as Judge David Tatel (left) and Washington Lawyers' Committee executive director Roderic Boggs join him on stage.*

Washington lawyers came together on Monday to honor some of their own for civil rights work.

Before a packed ballroom at the Grand Hyatt Washington, Senior Judge John Ferren of the District Columbia Court of Appeals and retired Judge Ricardo Urbina of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia received the Wiley A. Branton Award, the top honor of the Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs. The 24-year-old award is named after the longtime civil rights lawyer and former Howard University School of Law dean, and recognizes a career of civil rights advocacy.

Prior to becoming the first Latino appointed to the federal trial court, in 1994, Urbina was a judge in the District of Columbia Superior Court, a public defender in D.C. and a professor at Howard (when Branton was dean). Urbina also has advised the Washington Lawyers' Committee on outreach to the Latino community and assisted the Meyer Foundation, a nonprofit organization that helps low-income D.C. residents.

"To get an award in his name is probably one of the greatest honors that I can imagine," Urbina said.

Ferren also has a long history with civil rights work. Before he was appointed to the D.C. Court of Appeals in 1977, Ferren set up a citywide pro bono program at Kirkland & Ellis in Chicago, established a program at Harvard Law School to provide clinical training for students and created Hogan & Hartson's community services department.

The judge said he was grateful to receive an accolade named after Branton, whom he called a friend.

"He was a great civil rights lawyer," Ferren said. "He was a splendid lawyer."

The Washington Lawyers' Committee also gave an award to Sidney Dickstein, founding partner of Dickstein Shapiro. Dickstein, along with D.C. Public Schools Chancellor Kaya Henderson, received the Vincent E. Reed Award. Reed, a former D.C. schools superintendent and U.S. Department of Education assistant secretary, in 1978 urged the Washington Lawyers' Committee to partner with public schools in Washington.

Dickstein, whose firm has partnered with the Duke Ellington School of the Arts for 15 years, praised the Washington Lawyers' Committee for encouraging partnerships with schools.

"It is such a wonderful opportunity," he said.



*Urbina accepts the Wiley A. Branton Award.*



*Dickstein hoists the Vincent E. Reed Award with Boggs (left) and Legal Services Corp. general counsel Ronald Flagg at his side.*



*Lawyers filled the Grand Hyatt Washington ballroom for the awards ceremony.*

*Photos by The National Law Journal's Diego M. Radzinski.*